



Project | SEARCH

# Successful Strategies in Working with People who have Autism on the Job

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# What we know about transition to adulthood for Students with ASD

- The transition of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) from school to adulthood is an increasing dilemma (Wehman, Smith and Schall, 2009).

# What the research says...

- Shattuck (2012) examined patterns of service use among youth with ASD from the NLTS2 sample. Data on youth who exited high school.
  - 6% had competitive jobs, and
  - 21% had no employment or education experiences at all
  - 80% of these individuals were living with their parents,
  - 40% reported having no friends,

# Lets see if we can change that...

- What additional supports need to be included for students with ASD to be successful in Project SEARCH?
- What are the outcomes for students with ASD who go through the Project SEARCH internship?

# Method

- Randomized clinical trial
  - **Participants**
    - Students in their last year of high school
    - Diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum
    - Treatment (Project SEARCH) and Control (Regular High School Program) groups equal on all functional and employment characteristics ( $p > .05$ )

## Comparison of Demographic, Prior Employment and Functional Characteristics

Variable	Treatment	Control
Applied	25	17
Dropped	2	4
n (C 1, 2, & 3)	23	13
Age (C 1, 2, & 3)	19.2 years old	19.3 years old
Gender (C 1, 2, & 3)	.73 Male	.76 Male
Race (C 1, 2, & 3)	.45 African American .55 Caucasian	.61 African American .28 Caucasian .05 Asian .05 Unknown
Medical Diagnosis of ASD (C 1, 2, & 3)	.69 Autism .21 PDD-NOS .04 Aspergers .04 Other	.61 Autism .30 PDD-NOS .07 Aspergers .00 Other

Variable	Treatment	Control
Pre-Experimental Unpaid Internship Experiences (C1, 2, &3)	1.26	1.23
Pre-Experimental Paid Part-Time Work (C 1, 2, & 3)	0.39	0.38
Overall SIS Score Time 1 – (C1, 2,& 3)	82.59	80.71
Employment Subscale Time 1 – (C1 & 2)	8.41	8.28

# Above and Beyond

- Additional supports above and beyond SEARCH
  - Behavioral Consultation with Behavior Analyst
  - Consistent Structure to Seemingly Unstructured Internships
  - Behaviorally Defining Idioms, Social Skills, and Work Expectations
  - Visual Supports to Increase Implementation of Strategies
  - Self Monitoring Checklists and Reinforcement Programs
  - Role-Playing and Practice for Required Social Skills
  - Ongoing Intensive Instruction and Monitoring of Student Success





## Behavior Occurs

- Staff Meet
- Review Events around behavior

## Environment or Antecedent

- Factors that contribute
- Factors that mitigate
- Understand expectations?
- Can workers and Supervisor help?

## Behavior

- Why was it a problem?
- Know what's expected?
- Can perform it?
- Will visual supports help?

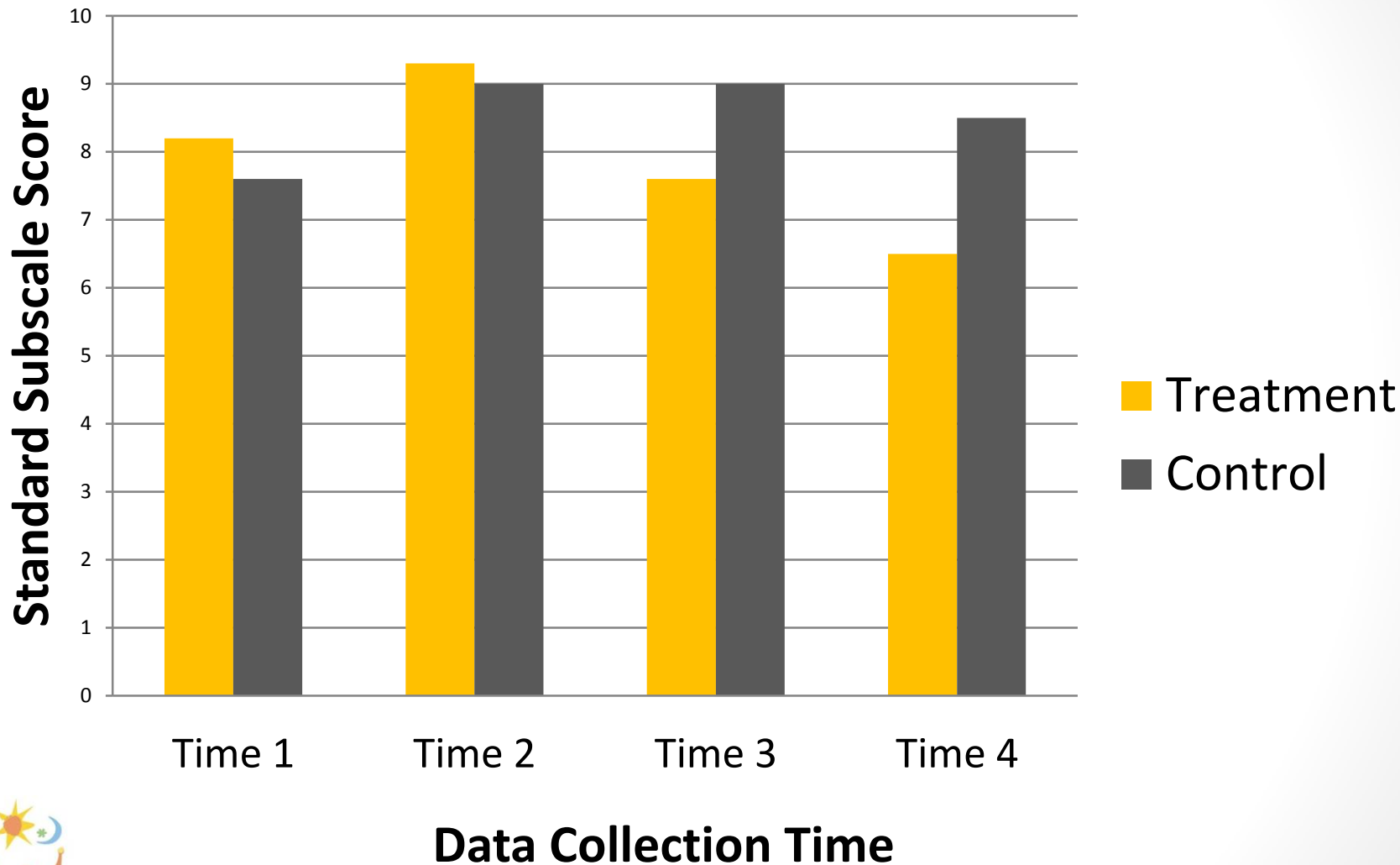
## Consequence

- Get or avoid?
- Can provide desired outcome?
- Understand consequences?
- Can Others help?

# Results

Variable	Treatment	Control
Employment Subscale Time 1 – (C1 & 2)	8.41	8.28
Employment Subscale Time 2 (C1 & C2)	9.3	9.0
Employment Subscale Time 3 – (C1)	7.6	7
Employment Time 2 – First 2 Cohorts Only (C1 & 2)	100%	0
Hours Worked Time 1 (C1 & 2)	20.36	0
Wage Time 1 – Yet to be analyzed (C1 & 2)	\$9.35	0

# Employment Subscale Standard Scores on the Support Intensity Scale



## Employment Outcomes for Treatment Group (Cohort 1)

Subject	Company	Department	Position
12	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Nutrition Services	Aide
14	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Infection Control	Assistant
3	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Family Center	Teacher's Aide
6	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Intensive Care Unit	ICU Assistant
5	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Environmental Services	Aide
9	Dropped due to lack of personal hygiene and self feeding independence before completion of program	N/A	N/A
16	Employed till Sept. 2010 in Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital, Dismissed due to aggression at work	Central Sterile Services	Aide

## Employment Outcomes for Treatment Group (Cohort 2)

Subject	Company	Department	Position
8	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Employee Wellness and Diabetic Treatment Center	Data Entry Technician
10	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Mother and Infant Unit	Aide
7	Aramark	Durable Medical Equipment	Technician
5	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Surgical Care	Surgical Care Technician
16	Ricoh	Print Shop	Technician
4	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Pharmacy	Pharmacy Assistant
2	Bon Secours Health System, St. Mary's Hospital	Environmental Services	Aide
11	Handcraft	Linen Distribution	Assistant

# Preliminary Results

- Youth with significant ASD can successfully transition into meaningful health care employment in non-traditional positions
- Access to intensive training embedded in community environments may improve the employment outcomes for youth with ASD
- Future research should aim to replicate this study in industries other than hospital settings.

# Questions???

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